

MORE ABOUT TUDORS

The Atmosphere at Chadderton : Modifications : B.O.A.C. MK. IVB. : Other Marks

ONE hardly dares to mention the name "Tudor" for fear of being associated with the regrettable and unseemly exchanges which have recently been heard in high places. It is doubly unfortunate that this important class of British aircraft, which has already had troubles enough to surmount, should now be drawn into a quasi-political slanging match. So much has taken place, and so little reliable information has emerged, that the public interest has been led from curiosity to wonderment, from surprise to bafflement, and, finally, to complete confusion.

Most ordinary people (who are footing the bill but, of course, have no say in the matter) would still rather like to ask "Are Tudors good or bad; who has the ability to judge; and has anyone the authority to do anything about it one way or another?" On the occasions when someone has dared to ask such questions others present have looked slightly horrified at such a display of ignorance, but have, nevertheless, carefully avoided having to express an opinion or answer the questions themselves.

After more than a year of argument, mind-changing and, in particular, buck-passing, there is little in the way of concrete fact on which to base an opinion.

About twelve months ago *Flight* paid a visit to Manchester to see how the Tudors were progressing and to try to straighten out a few points for ourselves. We came away, then, feeling both calmed and encouraged, though not much wiser on policy matters. Last week we paid another visit to the A. V. Roe factory and returned with similar feelings. There is no doubt at all that all the wrangling has had a most depressing effect on the staff at all levels. No one can work month after month with the thought in the back of his mind that some individual or committee may overnight decree that his previous year's work is to be scrapped or forwarded to the nearest jumble sale.

Nevertheless, one cannot help noticing and admiring the air of resigned patience which the Avro staff displays, whether test pilot, draughtsman, or one of the men who is changing the colour of the upholstery for the third time, or replacing the extra lavatory where the diplomatic mail locker was going to be before it was substituted for the engineer's panel. Amidst such frustration it is surprising to find a quite cheerful attitude of "Let all of them get on with their talking; we shall turn out a good aircraft yet, if not with their help, then in spite of them."

Conversion of Mk. 1s

So far as Tudor Is and IVs are concerned, a recommendation has been made that only Mark IVs be operated, and that existing B.O.A.C. Is therefore be converted into IVBs. Preliminary work has been started, but a final decision by the M.C.A. is awaited. Almost certainly this will not be forthcoming until the Tudor I from Boscombe returns from its Khartoum-Nairobi proving flight, the *Star Tiger* enquiry is completed, and all information from Boscombe, where there are two other Tudor IVs, has been examined.

Airframe design now seems to have been crystallized, and performance is satisfactory. Further trial operations on transocean and Empire routes are now required to show whether commercial operation can be practical and economical. The present grounding of the machines delivered to B.S.A.A. seems rather pointless, even as "a measure of prudence." More examination at Boscombe, tapping of wheels and shaking of tailplanes, is most unlikely to throw any light on the loss of *Star Tiger*. What is required in order to remove grounds for criticism is to get other IVs airborne on a few proving flights, to fill in the stage of experience that A.V.M. Bennett is alleged to have by-passed. If no deficiency is revealed, as is most probable, then the Tudor IVs should be put back into operation as soon as possible in order to build up more experience and to earn their keep.

While more Tudor IVs are being turned out, it is good policy to use completed Is for training. Three are now being supplied to B.O.A.C.

Recalling for a moment the many modifications, it may be said that, although the Tudor is still "young" to have experienced airline operation, growing pains are now about over. An examination of a Tudor in which the latest modifications have been embodied, and a perusal of the list of its 392 modifications, reveals that the aerodynamic changes are few but important. Visible alterations since prototype days include the tailplane, fin and rudder, all of which are re-styled and increased in area; the lengthened inboard engine nacelle tail fairings; shortened centre-section flaps; the reduced undercarriage



Comparative views of the Tudor I with (above) the original long, and (below) the shortened undercarriage.